

West Virginia Writers' Project

RESEARCH IDENTIFICATION REPORT

-6-

Subject Pocahontas County HistoryDate Dec. 24, 1940Research Worker Juanita S. DilleyDate Research Taken Dec. 10, 23,Typist Juanita S. DilleyDate Typed Dec. 24, 1940Source Deed Book 46 page 268

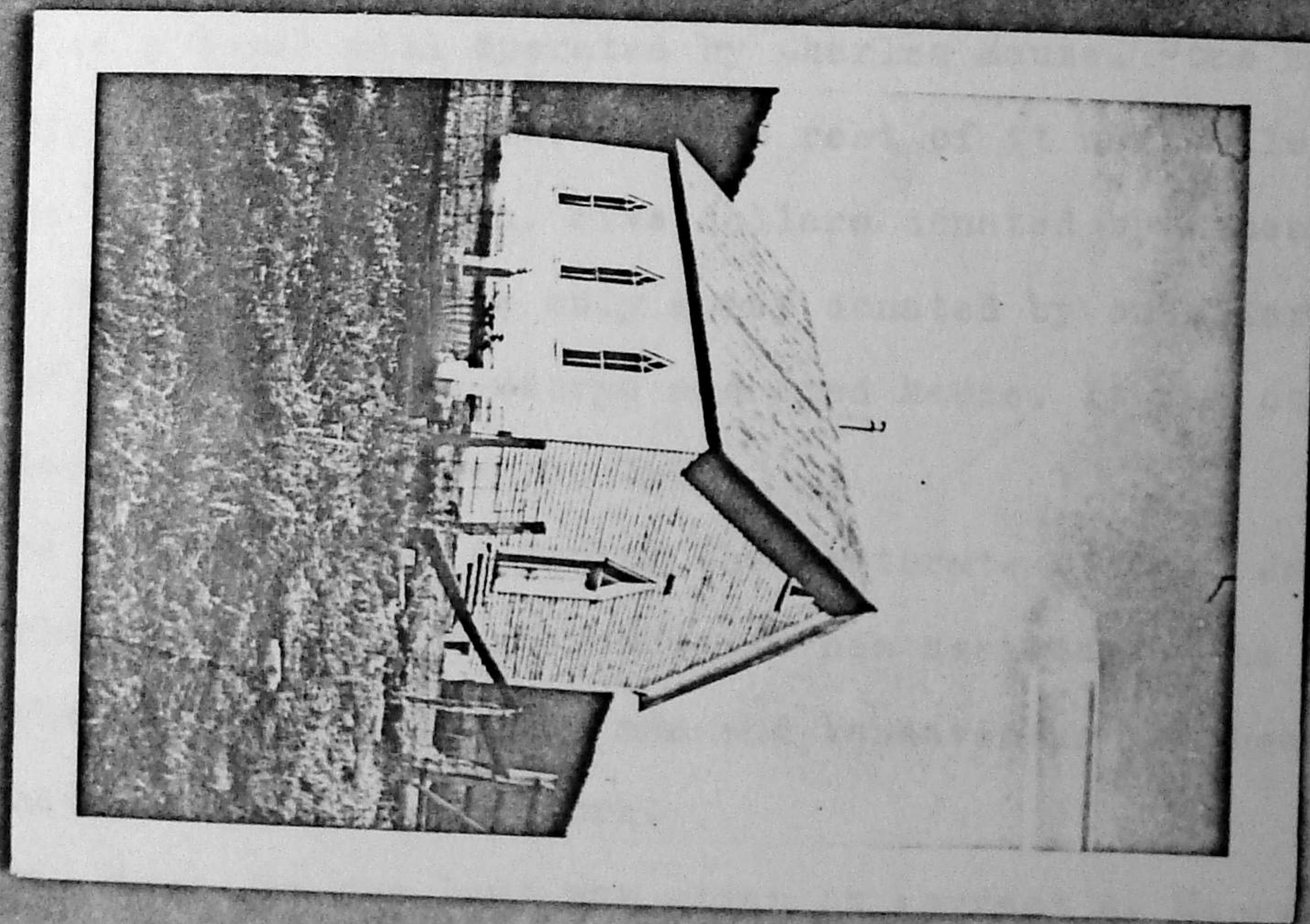
Date Filed _____

Church records

Morrest K. Moore

David Moore

Rev. Howard Wriston who was on this circuit last year.





Juanita S. Dilley

Clover Lick, W. Va.

BETHEL M. E. CHURCH--BACK ALLEGHANNEY MOUNTAIN

The first church services on Back Alleghaney Mountain were held in the Wanless school house, later in the Moore school house and then in the Cherry Grove school house.

The Hevener Brethern church had been built in 1904 but it was not used by the Methodists, so in 1906 the Methodists began to talk of building a church of their own. The idea met with approval, and a building committee of the following men was appointed, Ben Simmers, Forrest K. Moore, Strickler McLaughlin and Enos Curry.

The people of the community gave the timber and had it sawed on a local mill operated by Charles Mauze. Some money was donated by the people, and the rest of it was collected on the day of dedication. Five dollars donated by Ernest Moore of Dunmore was the only money donated by outsiders.

The carpenters were George and Fred Mauze. It was completed and dedicated on October 6, 1906.

The church was built during the pastorate of Rev. John McNeill, with Albert Vandevender as his assistant. The circuit had gotten too large for one man and Vandevender had been sent to take over part of the work.

The deed for the land was given by Forrest K. Moore and Margaret E. Moore his wife, to Forrest K. Moore, Enos F. Curry, Thomas H. McLaughlin, John F. Wooddell and Thomas Houchin, trustees of Bethel church, Durbin circuit, Lewisburg District, Baltimore Conference, Methodist Episcopal Church, South and their successors, etc.

The present church records show a membership of 45 for this church but there are only a few working members, and the church is a very weak one. The present workers are J. Frank Curry, Wallace Curry, David N. Moore, Forrest K. Moore and Mrs. Annie Cromer.

The trustees are W. B. Curry, J. Frank Curry, Cecil Houchens,

The stewards are Annie Cromer, J. Frank Curry, L. D. Nottingham and David N. Moore.

This summer the church had a lot of much needed repair work done on it. A new foundation, new flue, roof painted, new stoves and new windows. Most of the labor for this work was done by the people as a contribution. Material cost amounted to around \$100.

This church is an appointment on the Arbovale circuit since the union of the Methodist churches. Rev. D. R. Carder is the present pastor.

It is in sight of the Hevener Brethern church, and looks to me like the case of just one to many churches for a rural community.

Oct. 5, 1940

Nelle Y. McLaughlin

West Virginia Writers' Project

RESEARCH IDENTIFICATION REPORT

Subject Pocahontas County History
Chapter 6 ReligionDate February 4, 1941Research Worker Juanita S. DilleyDate Research Taken January 31, 1941Typist Juanita S. DilleyDate Typed Feb. 4, 1941Source Rev. R. H. Skaggs

Date Filed _____

Edith VanReenan

Luther McNeill

Deed Book 56 page 412



Juanita S. Dilley
Pocahontas County
Chapter 6 Religion
February 4, 1941

WHITES' CHAPEL M. E.-----WOODROW

The people of this community were formerly members of West Union Church on Stony Creek. Rev. W. A. Grogg held a revival. Later Howard Underwood and W. T. Hogsett also held a revival and quite a large class was formed. When a new school house was built the Board of Education sold this old school house and the deed was given on October 20, 1919 between the Board of Education of Edray District, Pocahontas County, a corporation, and James White and Ruth White his wife parties of the first part, and Lloyd VanReenan, Elmer Baxter, John Galford, Owen Mellison, and J. A. Arbogast, trustees for Whites' chapel of the M. E. Church of the West Virginia Conference. The parties of the first part do hereby sell, grant and convey unto the parties of the second part all of their rights, titles and interests in and to the lot on which the Laurel Creek school house now stands containing one half acre. It is understood, however, that the Board of Education hereby reserve the right, should necessity require, to use said building for school purposes for the period of three years, without any compensation to the parties of the second part. The Board of Education also reserves from this conveyance, all furniture and fixtures now in said building which were purchased by said Board and have been used for school purposes.

As soon as this building had been purchased, Luther McNeill and William Shoemaker took a contract for \$325. and converted it into a church. It was dedicated by G. Sampson under the pastorate of Rev. M. H. Ramsey who served the Edray circuit from 1916 to 1920.

*They made
it larger.*

07-DSC00655.JPG

R. H. Skaggs is the present pastor. He preaches at this church once a month, but there is a very small class with only around 20 enrolled in the S. S. There is no S. S. at all in the winter, so there is some talk of again uniting it with West Union.

The Stewards are Lloyd VanReenan, Andrew Galford, and Edith VanReenan. Trustees, Lloyd VanReenan, Elmer Baxter and Andrew Galford. Lloyd Woods is the class leader. Teachers- Lloyd Woods, Lloyd VanReenan and Edith VanReenan, and Andrew Galford is the Supt. So you see there are only a few to carry on the work. Seems to me it was really a mistake to have built it in the first place as it is only a mile or so from West Union and it is about as easy to go to West Union as to Whites Chapel.

The Edray circuit consists of the following churches:

1. Edray
2. Whites Chapel
3. West Union
4. Swago
5. Marys Chapel
6. Slaty Fork
7. Mt. Pleasant
8. Hamline Chapel
9. Campbelltown

OFFICE LETTER

To <u>Bruce Crawford</u>	Office	Date
From <u>Juanita S. Dilley</u>	Office	Referring to
Subject <u>Brethern churches</u>		File

Separate sheet for each subject. Omit all formalities. For office letters only.

Use in connection with this material, the histories of the following churches previously sent in: Central Union, Union Chapel called Beverage church found under the churches at Poage Lane. Keer Memorial, Boyer; New Hope between Frost and Dunmore.

A-1028

West Virginia Writers' Project

RESEARCH IDENTIFICATION REPORT

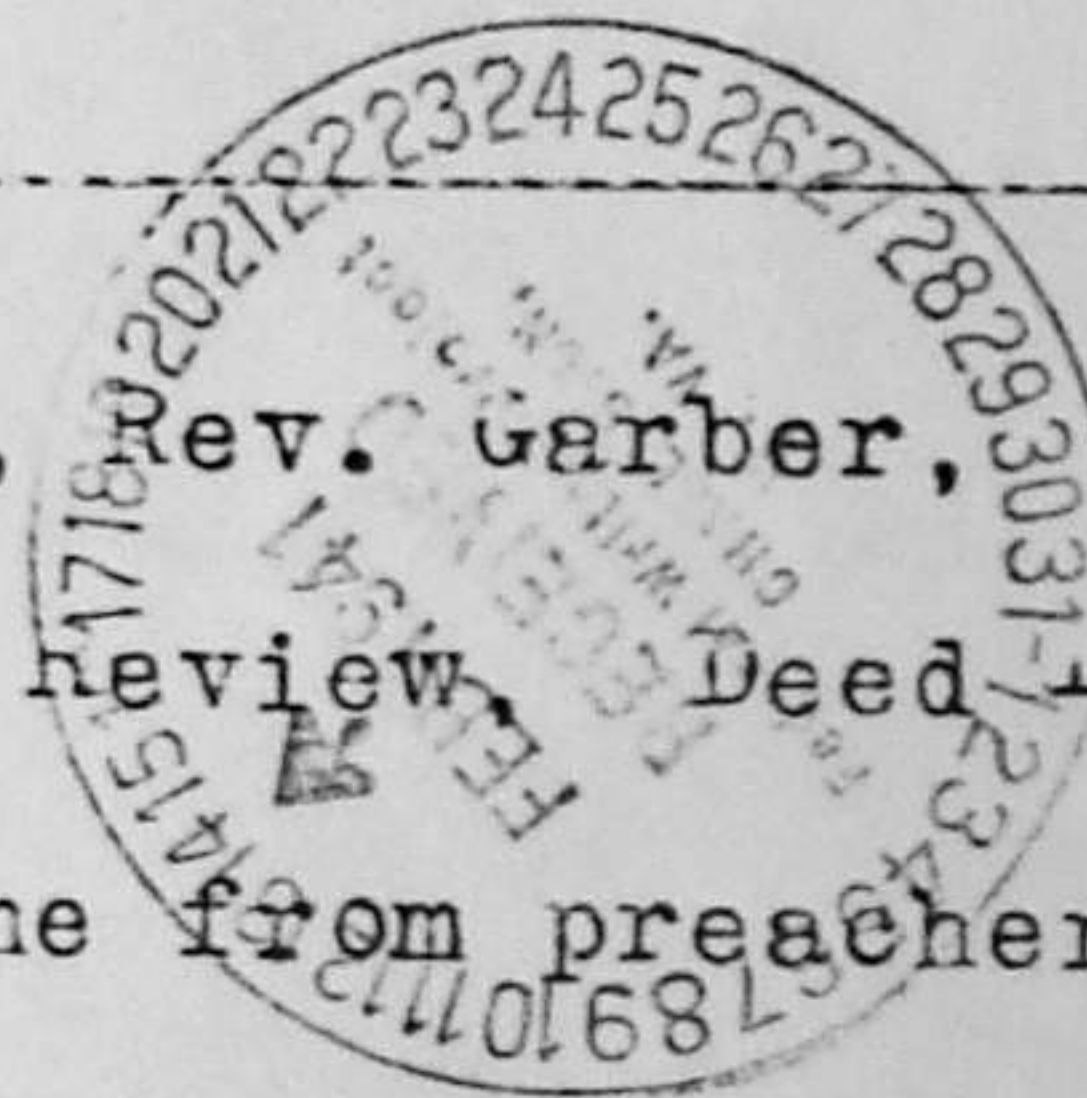
Subject Pocahontas County History Date Feb. 10, 1941

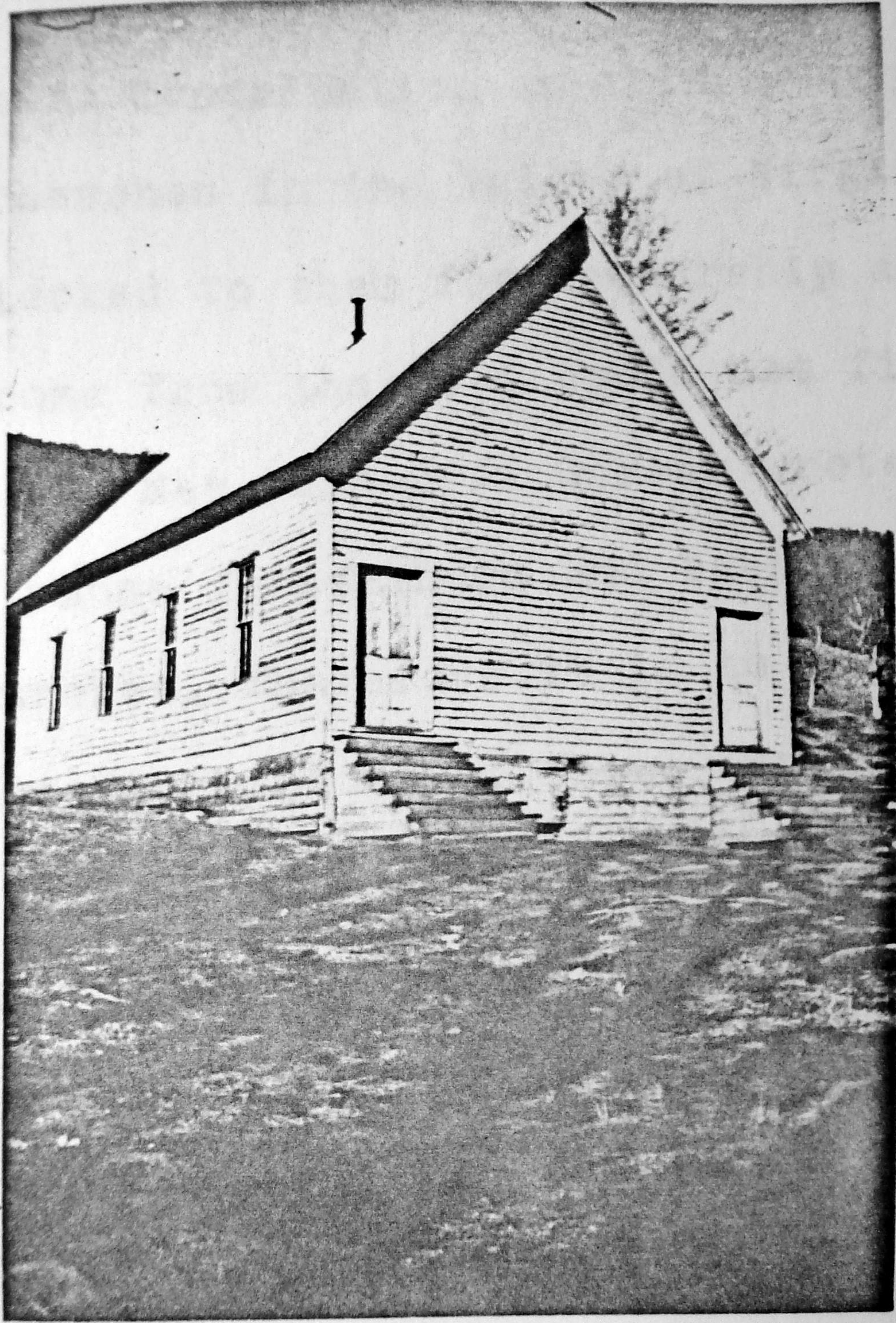
Research Worker Juanita S. Dilley Date Research Taken Dec. 10, 23, Feb. 8

Typist Juanita S. Dilley Date Typed Feb. 10, 1941

Source Deed Book 36 page 358 Date Filed
33 page 424

Mrs. Adam O. Hevener, Mrs. Martha Cassell, Rev. Garber, Rev. Pugh. Pocahontas Times, West Virginia Review, Deed Book 60 page 476, and from material gotten for me from preachers and records in Virginia, by Rev. Garber of Durbin.





Juanita S Dilley
Pocahontas County
Chapter 6 Religion
February 10. 1941

BRETHERN CHURCH IN POCAHONTAS COUNTY

The Brethern denomination in this county has always been under the churches in the Valley of Virginia, or at least we have always looked to them for leadership and most of our preachers have come from there. I could ~~not~~ find no records in this county, but Rev. Isaac J. Garber wrote to some older men in Virginia whose forefathers had been early ministers in the mountain churches. Therefore it is to them that I am indebted for much of the early history of these churches.

Quoting from a letter from A. S. Thomas, "There are no records to my knowledge, only I know that the Mission work was established in Pocahontas at an early date. I know that in 1858 my father Jacob Thomas was on a preaching tour into the county (horse back). My Uncle Daniel Thomas became ill and Martin Ruff was sent after him, but he had died and was buried before father reached home. I am sure that before the Civil War, there was preaching in that county for I have heard Bro. George Wine tell about an old church one half mile this side of Allegheney Chapel. The first trip I made was before the Chapel was built. We preached just below the road from the chapel. The work had been in progress some years before for there were two preachers when I first went, Bro. W. Wilmoth and Bro. John Varner. I made this trip about 50 years ago."

The church he here refers to is the old log church on Top Allegheney mountain near the Virginia line. The deed

2
for this old church was given on July 31, 1858 by Jacob Yeager and Sarah his wife, and John Yeager and Margaret his wife, parties of the first part, to John Yeager, Jonas Puffenbarger, Able Wilfong, Andrew Burner, Washington Arbogast, Andrew Wooddell and Frank Gumm, trustees. Camp Baldwin was located on this site during the Civil War and the old church was used as a hospital and a barracks.

This church is believed to be the first preaching place of the Brethern, or Dunkards as they were usually called, in this county. From there it spread to Union Chapel, called Beverage Church, on Clover Creek.

"The first statistics of the Brethern church were compiled about 1880. At that time they show the following places where there was regular preaching in West Virginia. Valley Head in Randolph county, Top Allegheney in Pocahontas county, Clover Creek in Pocahontas county, Dry Run, Mt. Freedom, South Branch, South Fork and Pendleton all in Pendleton county. The following Brethern had been elected to the ministry in these communities and were helping carry on the work, J. Spencer, John Varner, and W. Wilmoth of Top Allegheney, B. Wilfong of Edray and Levi Beverage of Clover Creek." (Wilfongs' address was Edray but he lived only a few miles from Beverage church on Clover Creek). " Jacob Thomas and Martin Miller, Sr. were early ministers in Pocahontas county, and a little later came Hiram Miller and Joe Cline." Joe Beverage, a brother to Levi, often came here to visit his brothers and would assist in a revival or hold services on Sunday. Jacob Garber was also an early preacher in this county.

In 1903, a new church called Allegheney Chapel was built

on Top Allegheney, the dead was given by Wm. B. Freeman and Mary A. Freeman his wife, parties of the first part, to W. Lee Wilmoth and Marvin Wilfong, two of a board of five trustees; representing the Dunkard church, Martin J. Colaw and P. A. Tracy (representing the M. E. Church) and Wm. B. Freeman, to be held in trust by them and their successors as a public place of worship for the two denominations above mentioned: The M. E. Church to use it on the first and third Sundays, and the Dunkards Church to use it on the second and fourth Sundays of each month. A certain tract of land on the Staunton and Parkersburg Turnpike near where the Buffalo Mountain road intersects the Pike, containing one acre."

From a clipping on the death of Mrs. Wilmoth in "ov: " Mrs. Sabina Wilmoth labored earnestly beside her husband to build a better home and community life. Their efforts were centered especially on the Top Allegheney church, of which she was a life long member. Their home became the temporary home for summer workers and visiting ministers, and is remembered by all for the hospitality and the interest in music that was prevalent there." She was the wife of W. Lee Wilmoth, who is the same W. Wilmoth referred to previously.

"Allegheney Chapel is said to be the highest church in West Virginia. It stands at an elevation of 3000 feet. It must be one of the three or four highest churches in all the Appalachians. This church is built on a battle field. The Battle of Top Allegheney was fought here, part of it on the very ground on which the church stands. Here the Federal forces attacked and were driven back by the Confederates who had fortified the mountain just east of the present site of the church. Deep trenches

4
remain today a few hundred feet from the church. Near them are fifteen or twenty heaps of stones that were once the chimneys of log cabins in which the Confederates wintered. These cabins stood for some years after the Civil War.

Re:
Ty
So
The Allegheney Chapel is used by two denominations. The German Baptist Brethern hold services in it one Sunday and the Methodists the next. The membership includes the residents of two states Virginia and West Virginia. Near this unusually situated church is some of the most beautiful scenery in all West Virginia." From-West Virginia Review, by Charles Carpenter

HEVENER BRETHERN CHURCH

This church on Back Allegheney Mountain, two miles from Hosterman was the first, and is the only church in the county built by the Brethern themselves and deeded to them alone. The members of this church had their first services at the home of Adam and Rebecca Hevener. Adam Hevener, Sr. and his brothers Robert, Samuel and John had come from Rockingham county Virginia, and settled on Back Mountain some time in the later part of the 1800's. They were Brethern when they came. In 1904, they built a church on land given by Samuel Hevener, widower, to James K. Hoover, Robert J. Hevener and John J. Hevener, trustees of the German Baptist Brethern near Hosterman- for the use of the German Baptist Brethern of Hevener Church.

The church was completed and dedicated on June 12, 1904. The dedicatory sermon was preached by Hiram G. Miller of Bridgewater, Virginia. At the time the church was built, there were only a few families of Brethern on the mountain. These were the families of the above named Heveners, James K. Hoover,

5
and Benjamin Collins, a local preacher, but later they had a ~~member~~ membership of around 60.

After the church was built, John W. Hevener became the preacher and remained so until he moved to Pennsylvania fifteen years ago. Rev. E. F. Sherfy then came on the work and preached not only at Hevener church but at Boyer, Top Allegheny, ^{New} Hope. After him came Isaac J. Garber, who has been on the circuit for seven years, and is the eighth generation in a family of Brethern preachers. He is to be sent to a church in Virginia the first of March, and some one else will take his place here. Rev. J. W. Pugh was licenced by the Brethern to preach 20 years ago and since that time has been very active in carrying on the work in this county.

Each year preachers from the Valley of Virginia come to Hevener church and hold revivals. Twenty three years ago a preacher by the name of Ernest Coughman held a revival and baptised 20 in one day.

Each summer, too, they send one of their women workers here to conduct a Bible School in this church.

The present members are: S. S. Davidson and family, Adam O. Hevener, Jr. and family, Mrs. Herman Gratehouse, Eva Gratehouse, John Gratehouse and family, James M. Colaw and family, A. E. Sheets and family, Parker Gragg and family, Mrs. Sallie Wright. Mrs. Velma Sutton of Durbin comes to this church for communion.

Brethern church

In 1918, the old school house at Hosterman was sold by the Board of Education to E. M. and C. M. Ratliff who in turn deeded it to D. H. Wright, trustee, and it was for a time used as a Progressive Dunkard church. It was then sold and moved to the upper end of the county in 1922 and the deed was given by Charles B. Cromer and Mary E. Cromer his wife, to W. H. Collins, D. H. Wright, and J. R. Cromer, trustees. It was used only a few years, when it was destroyed by fire.

At the present time there are two Brethern preachers in this county. Rev. Isaac J. Garber and Rev. J. W. Pugh.

At Hevener church there are 58 members. At Kerr Memorial church Boyer they have their largest membership with 92 members, from Boyer and surrounding communities, some of them as far south as Glade Hill. At New Hope church between Frost and Dunmore there is a membership of 15. At Allegheney Chapel on Top Allegheney there are only 11 members, only 4 of whom are land owners, the others are just ready to move from the mountain at any time. Because of this small class and since the Methodists have not used the church for several years, it has gone down until the church has been abandoned altogether, and plans are to have it torn down in the spring and the material divided equally between the two denominations. The Methodists plan to use their part of the lumber to build class rooms to the Arbovale church. The Brethern are not sure yet just what they will use their part of it for, perhaps to build a church to accommodate some of the members that now belong to the Boyer church. Rev. Garber has all of the above named appointments.

Rev. Pugh preaches at Woods Poage Chapel at Poage Lane.

He has a membership of 20 at this church. There has been a class in this community since 1873 when Union Chapel, known as Beverage church was built, and no one knows how long before.

He also preaches on Stony Creek. At first they used old Hamline chapel, but they now use the Presbyterian church at that place.

There are 14 members on Stony Creek with Mrs Ed. Wooddell and her daughter Ada as two of the main workers. At Central Union there are 10 members with Levi Ervine and Ressie Wilfong as two of the main ones. Luster Wooddell and Ressie Wilfong are the Deacons.

Records show that as the Brethern moved into the county, that they made requests for preachers to be sent and a committee of S. A. Shaver, John A. Cline and F. S. Sanger were appointed to receive calls and to see that they were filled by a minister. Local churches were, however, responsible for the mission work in the mountain churches in this District until in 1920 when a District Board was appointed to look after the mountain churches. An effort is being made to make them self reliant instead of looking to the churches in Virginia for so much help.

April 6, 1940

Nelle Y. McLaughlin
Marlinton, W. Va.POCAHONTAS COUNTY

-1-

Chapter 4- Section 2

My friend, Moody Moore, close observer of things in general and out of door things in particular, has been telling me for years of an Indian grave on the old road between the Jake place and Huntersville, about opposite the mouth of Browns Creek. In the days of his youth, he had hunted for the traditional jar of silver buried on the rising ground near the mouth of a stream, away back in the 1750's or 1760's.

His uncle the late William Moore of Browns Creek, had found a large heap of piled stones when he worked on the new road around the Jake Hill in 1890. He told the young nephew about it and Moody proceeded to investigate to see if by any chance this might be the place the treasure was buried.

Moving tons of stones, Mr. Moore found no silver, but he did uncover the bones of not less than a half dozen men. The bodies had been laid in a circle, feet to the center. One at least had been a man of gigantic stature, with a skull of unusual thickness. From the way his teeth were worn down, it was presumed he had been up in years when he met death. No silver was found, nor anything else to show whether Indians or whites had been buried there. The bodies had been placed upon the carpet of forest leaves and moulded, with no excavation, and tons of stones piled upon them. The heap was circular and per-

POCAHONTAS COUNTY

-2-

haps a rod in diameter.

The tragedy which overtook this party will remain one of the mysteries of these mountains. If they were Indians and the victims of a battle between tribes, I read the sign that they belonged to the victorious side. They were laid to rest with care on a pleasant bench in the full light of the rising sun. But if Indians, surely some stone weapons, implements and ornaments would have been found.

As for the whites, it is not unlikely that parties of hunters and trappers met death in the forest vastness of these mountains prior to the general settlements which began in the late 1760's and early 70's. Cold might wipe them out in the winter; the regulars of the standing armies of the Six Nations, in accordance with provisions of the Treaty of Albany, 1722, would kill any whites trespassing upon Indian ground; a party of mercenary scalp hunters looking for scalps to claim bounty at Detroit in French and Indian war times, would murder wh^Mever they found; or it may have been the work of a bloody band of outlaws raiding a camp for the winter fur catch. Indian regulars, mercenaries or white outlaws would leave the bones of their victims to bleach where they fell, to be gathered together for decent and perhaps Christian burial by the first party of white hunters.

Little or no record need ever be expected now to be found of such disappearances. There was a strong order by the King of Great Britain to keep out of the Indian Country

POCAHONTAS COUNTY

-3-

on the Western Waters. By solemn treaty he said that the Indian could kill with impunity any of his subjects so trespassing. No record of such loss, if known, would be upon the court books at Staunton. In the Augusta County records there now and then appears the notation of a man on the delinquent tax list or one wanted for debt or for trial or witness "Disappeared in the Greenbrier Country."

Along in the 1750's in the Greenbrier Country, "a days journey from Ft. Dinwiddie" on Jacksons River, a party of Indians, some say as many as fifteen, were killed by whites. This brought reverberations even to the King's court at London, and that mighty monarch made due apology to the Indian nation for the breach upon their people. The man responsible got out of it by saying he could not tell what kind of Indians they were; they looked like a war party of Shawnees to him, and he was taking no chances.

That sounded so like a Marlinton trick to me that I have always put Marlins Bottom as the place where it was pulled. However, the mound at Huntersville is twenty miles from Fort Dinwiddie---a fair days walk on mountain trails---and it may be this cairn marks the resting place of these friendly Indians done to death through excess of caution, to put the best face possible on the matter.

The absence of any personal belongings of stone would indicate burial after robbery. The care with which the bodies were laid away indicates to me burial by friends. The placing of the bodies on top of the ground may mean burial in the

POCAHONTAS COUNTY

-4-

winter time on frozen ground, or merely lack of good digging implements and hurry to get away by the survivors. However, they did a good job of rock piling.

The good state of preservation of the bones is sign to me that burial could not have been long before the arrival of settlers in the Knapps Creek valley, about one hundred sixty-five years ago.

There are Indian mounds scattered all over this region; most of dirt but occasionally a stone pile. In some of them remains of men are found, with personal stone belongings. In others only the sign of fire is seen.

Talking about lost men in these mountains, I would say that for wholesale disappearance the "Sandy Creek Voyage" holds the record. This was a demonstration in force against the Indian towns on the Ohio River. It was staged in cold weather to catch the Indians in winter quarters, before they were ready for their spring time raids. The army traveled by way of the Big Sandy route. On the Tug Fork or Sandy on the way out a young buffalo was killed. The hide was hung in a tree to be taken on the return trip. The ones who did return that way were so hungry they cut the hide up in throngs -tugs-and ate it. Hence the name Tug River.

The winter had been mild east of the mountains, but when the army got well into the mountains there was one of those late snow storms with great cold which so often end up a mild winter. They talk about two feet of snow and twenty degrees below zero

POCAHONTAS COUNTY

-5-

and no doubt the Sandy Creek voyagers experienced that much and more. The army broke up into small parties to work their way back to the settlements east of the mountains. How many perished from cold exposure and starvation is not known. I have no doubt that some of the parties attempted to return by way of the Greenbrier valley- the most direct route home for those who were from the Jackson River, Cow Pasture and Shenandoah settlements. There were two causes for the army breaking up. One was that each rugged individual composing the army had a better way home than the one proposed by the leaders. We have people in the mountains to this day who demonstrate such character. The other reason was that by breaking up in smaller parties, and spreading out over different routes, some would find game and get through, while if they stuck together all might perish. It is not an unreasonable guess that the bones under the rock pile near Huntersville might possibly be the remains of a party returning from the ill fated Sandy Creek Voyage. Anyway, these mountains were full of freezing, starving men, trekking back home in the deep snow and fearful cold of a late winter storm.

Some years ago a number of well preserved skeletons were found behind a wall under a rock cliff on the Greenbrier below the Buckley place at the mouth of Swago. My guess was that these were Sandy Creek voyagers. They were white men as they had long heads.

About the tradition of buried silver treasure in these

POCAHONTAS COUNTY

-6-

mountains, the versions differ. The general run of the story is that a party of Frenchmen and Indians were traveling this way from the Mississippi Country loaded down with silver, making for Ft. Duquesne and Canada. At the mouth of a stream where a run came into a smaller stream, they found they were pursued. Here they buried pots of silver and sought safety in flight and never returned. I have heard the exact location is the mouth of Swago, Stony Creek, Douthards Creek, Clover Creek, Deer Creek, forks of Deer Creek, mouth and forks of Sitlington Creek, Indian Draft and most everywhere else. However, I hold there is little doubt that this treasure is buried on the waters of Stony Creek. Up on the family's Jerico Farms, there are still holes in the ground which a treasure seeker dug seventy years ago. I do not argue the matter but listen with patience to all who know where this treasure is, even to those who are so far off their base as to say that French Creek, in Upshur, or Jackson Mill in Lewis, or Peel Tree on Lost Creek and Clarksburg on the West Fork, in Harrison have the exact location.

From an Editorial written by Calvin W. Price in the pocahontas Times for May 1935.